the BI-MONTHLY

NO 3 MAY/JUNE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR BISEXUALS

INSIDE:

BEYOND ROLES

NON-VIOLENCE AND THE STATE

OH, TO BE NORMAL...

BOOK REVIEWS, STORIES, POEMS,.....

Welcome to this, the third issue of the Bi-Monthly and once again many thanks to all of you who have contributed to the issue. Yes, some of your pieces don't appear in this one - but we have them in the file for the next issue!
Keep all your articles, poems, letters coming in, and we're very grateful to all of you who type your contributions - it makes our job so much easier.
The next copy date isJuly 14th.
We need more assistance in getting the magazine distributed to bookshops, so if anyone could lend a hand - particularly if you're outside London, please do get in touch.
The address for all correspondence is
BM/BI, London WC1N 3XX.

As we go to press the forces of Laura Norder are hotting up their attack on our liberties. The raids on 'Gay's The Word' and 'Lavender Menace' bookshops and the new Police and Criminal Evidence Bill are the most visible aspects of a campaign to roll back the advances made by women and minority groups over the past twenty years. In this light we are urging our readers to participate in resisting such encroachments, particularly by supporting both the demonstration against the Police Bill on 19th May and the Defend 'Gay's The Word' Campaign.

Many thanks to the contributors in this issue;
John Barker, Leigh Anne Gray, Philip Kane,
David Burkle, Jo, Maria and all those who sent in logos.

The Bi-Monthly Collective; David Burkle
Richard
Cris Claxton Stevens

The Bi-Monthly, Editors Philip Kane and Jules Hobday
BM/BI, London WC1N 3XX.

beyond roles 2

JOHN BARKER

Why is bisexuality such a mystery and to many non-existent? Part of the difficulty is that there is no simple way of stating just what bisexuality is. This way of being has not been given much if any attention in terms of our life experiences. Very few of us have been encouraged or even allowed to consider whether we may be bisexual. When pressures to see ourselves as straight end in failure, we may then be expected to approximate or mimic such a lifestyle as a gay person. Whichever way one goes for whatever reasons, pressures are then built up to prevent any shifting around, any change.

At its simplest, bisexuality is about attraction to and the need for intimacy with both sexes. The attraction may be in one or more ways eg emotional, sensual, sexual. It may not be as strong for one sex as the other, may or may not shift to and from each sex during the course of a person's life and may or may not be acted upon - if not, it will be very real in phantasies and dreams which are regarded by some as better indicators of our real selves than what we do. If this seems to blur clear cut ideas about where we all fit in the order of things, maybe this is what is needed.

Bisexuals too need to express their full range of needs and feelings which are about being human. They find the assumption of its non-existance very frustrating and being pushed or counselled towards either end of the sexual continuum. We all like to think that we exist or belong.

Gays have had to struggle to gain recognition but at least they have been able to identify with other gays. At least their existence was acknowledged before decriminalization in 1967. Even studies on alternative lifestyles, where in some cases one might expect bisexuality to be the norm, participant researchers only speculate about the incidence whilst believing it will be easier to research openly in the not too distant future. Again there has tended to be an assumption of its non-existence.

Bisexuality is not a prescription for promiscuity, which can be a shallow experience and a 'use', even 'abuse' of others at times. It suggests a futile search for fulfilment, doing nothing for needs of intimacy with others. However, promiscuity should not be confused with occasional sexual encounters for their own sake.

There is not a one and only right way for a man to relate toaa woman or vice versa or a right way to perform sexually. We are already seeing a shift towards balance, an integration of the whole rather than a dichotomy with two polar types. It is this integration of the whole which is so important to bisexuals, bringing the two halves together and discarding the barrier which had kept them so falsely separated for so long.

For many people, using the label of bisexual is a way of proclaiming that they have not and are not prepared to reject possibilities of emotional and/or sexual relationships with both sexes. They cannot therefore be a homogenous group. They have no crystallized culture into which they can become trapped with stereotyped roles. At either end of the sexual continuum, there are expectations to be attracted to the one and only sex. This kind of clear expectation is lacking amongst bisexuals. How you feel and relate at one time is not demanded at another. Each person's experience of what it is to be bisexual may be very different.

To wear the label bisexual therefore still calls for some clarification as to one's personal needs and lifestyle. What there is certainty about, is that to wear the label of "gay" is to live as much a lie or only a part of oneself as it would be to masquerade as straight. Neither side wants doubts and uncertainties raised about where they might really

stand. That would cut through well established cultures and patterns of living. It is just this which the bisexual must do. We have to carve out some space for ourselves and work with gays and straights to increase our understanding of sexuality in all its aspects.

NEED FOR INTIMACY

I have already mentioned that we may be so used to performing roles in society, that we adopt these not only in our social but emotional and sexual relationships. Roles have to be discarded so that we are not drawn into thinking "How am I supposed to behave in this situation?" We have to learn to trust our feelings and needs. Roles provide some clear ideas about what to do in a given situation but bisexuals have no role, partly due to the denial of our existence. We must avoid the danger of falling into the role trap. There is no culture or ghetto to restrict or restrain possibilities. We have a blank sheet to work from and a great part to play in bridging the gap between orthodox and progressive ways of relating, by directly confronting the fear of intimacy which exists.

COUNTERING SEXISM

As sexism has been forced into the open there has been a shift away from the social role prescriptions of man-woman, husband-wife and other similar polarizations of action, feeling and attitude. The similarities between the sexes are so much greater than any differences we may have as to make the latter insignificant, given a non-sexist society. Rather than separate out for one sex ideas such as tenderness and passivity and for the other aggression and dominance, we want each person, regardless of sex, to be able to recognise the full range of possibilities within themselves at various times.

I'm not sure how much of an advance has been made within progressive organizations. I recall vividly a feminist who made me aware of aspects of sexism which I had not been clear about. She pointed to the way Margaret Thatcher was being dismissed in her early days for being a woman, rather her emulation of the worst in men and the reactionary values behind her actions. This same feminist later dismissed the views of a prominent member of a neo-nazi group with "...he is a bloody queer anyway." I didn't have the confidence at the time to pick this up. Such remarks are inhibiting, especially to those who need to discuss doubts about their sexuality and are struggling to find the courage to do so. It is not what is said which counts but the underlying attitude and message. A restricted and oppressive atmosphere is created, so typical in schools and some would-be progressive political groups.

As for bisexuality, a dismissive example comes from a man who is not only publicly opposed to sexism but organizes workshops for groups of men to consider sexuality and the concept of masculinity. "I think he plays around with men and women". The person referred to was a close acquaintance if not a friend, someone who by most accounts would be regarded as sensitive to and respectful of others' needs. The question arises as to why this should be treated so dismissively and superficially. Should we be making such negative judgements of our friends and the ways in which they express themselves?

One misunderstanding of bisexuality comes directly from the word itself. It implies that sex and maybe sex only is taking place between two or more people, involving both sexes. The complexity of emotions and needs does not become immediately apparent in the term. That something more complete and salutary might be experienced only becomes apparent if one is receptive to finding out.

As conventional theorists and counsellors may be as much use as a hole in the head, it is vital that anti-sexist men and women understand the issues in political terms. If this can be achieved, one of the major contributions we can make towards reducing sexism is to enable

others to define their own sexuality and if necessary to keep redefining it. Anyone seeking counselling help might be well advised to ask the counsellor about their perspective/s before doing anything else.

Part of our task must be to examine closely the dyadic-monogamous relationship, where it succeeds and where it fails. Far too much is usually expected of a partner so that they fall short of the phan phantasies we project onto them. How can any one person be expected to meet all our needs? If it were possible to quantify our expectations and needs, out of say ten our partner might meet seven or eight. What of the other two or three? 'Extra-marital liaisons' may be secretly encouraged and socially condoned. In heterosexual terms, we are aware of the problems likely to be raised. Monogamy creates pressures to have one and only one close relationship, which is guaranteed to generate fears and jealousy. What, though, when a partner establishes another relationship - with a person of their own sex? If our minds are cluttered with traditional theories about sexuality, which we have not worked through intellectually and most importantly at an emotional-cum-realization level, we respond in very predictable ways. A classic is "My God, what awful things have I done to bring this about?" Another self-doubt is "What is so wrong with me to have put them off my own sex?!" How many people would feel confident enough to say "That is a need I cannot meet and I'm still very important, if only as the one of the opposite sex"? In the present climate this is unlikely to be a typical reaction, unless friends or a support group such as SIGMA can help untangle the mess of thoughts and feelings.

PRESCRIPTIVE HETEROSEXUALITY

Those of us angered by sexism do little if we fail to challenge the heterosexual bias which dominates to the point of being 'compulsory'. If you doubt this consider why, for example, you hear no radio requests for gay or bisexual lovers, adverts do not portray sincere and stable gay or bisexual relationships, and those in authority and positions of influence conceal such aspects of t themselves through fear of being totally devalued.

The lie of each and every social facade distorts the ways in which we perceive others and the ways in which we come to organize and experience our feelings. Such distortions provide us with unreal images of others and affect the ways in which we compare ourselves and relate to those around us. It denies us the right to know others as they are and would like to be both in private and in public. What we do see confuses and distorts those who are hopelessly struggling with dominant beliefs to know themselves. This is particularly hard for those who have come to realize that they do not fall into categories at either end of the sexual or emotional continuum. Reinforcement of self-repression, emotional and cognitive disconance and social oppression may be aetiological factors in 'mental illness'. In such cases, 'treatments' must relate to causes.

'TREATING' HETEROSEXUALITY

In a free society, everyone should be able to define and live their own sexuality without the promotion of dominant theories to the exclusion of all else, eg in schools and the media. We should condemn as repressive and unsound those in 'helping roles' who police thoughts and feelings in line with dominant beliefs and values, to maintain the interests of the status quo. Therapists or counsellors who police the morals and private behaviour of others must be challenged, especially when they do not make explicit the underlying politics. There must be opportunities to select or reject such 'help'. Unfortunately, many counsellors fail to understand the policing nature of their task and may make false claims to objectivity and neutrality.

ATTITUDES AS VIOLENCE

As things stand, if neither polarization feels comfortable a social and psychological vacuum may be experienced, creating dangers of succumbing to self-doubts and ideas of freakishness - especially for the less extroverted and socially confident. A society which is both sexually and emotionally oppressive generates individuals who repress their needs to a degree which distorts. The stigma conferred and subsequent reactions can be measured in terms of psychological violence towards others.

Tolerance of others and their differing needs is no substitute for a large dose of acceptance and encouragement. Efforts need to be directed towards social change, to accomodate a variety of lifestyles based upon reciprocal love and respect. Bourgeois individualism, even in the guise of some 'growth' therapies advocating permissive hedonism, does nothing to confront the social bases from which the 'problem' springs. Bisexuality, like so many things, is only a 'problem' in so far as it is socially defined and evaluated. Personal counselling can only be valid when structural oppression is tackled and each person is enabled to discover their true selves. Equally important is to discover their 'oneness' with others and all that is natural. Each part of our view on the world is important but we must not neglect the fact that the whole is much more than the sum of the parts. Without a coherent perspective, which I believe must include a respect for the "planet" and other life forms, the distortions, violence and destruction of our present age will continue.

SUPPORT GROUP

When bisexuals gain recognition for everything which they experience, it can be safely assumed that there will be a long struggle to be viewed in a positive light. It seems essential in order to shorten this process and to save wasting a great deal of emotional energy, that support groups be formed. Unlike many other support groups, strength could lie in the acceptance of a range of needs and lifestyles, rather than develop a clear culture with set ideas about how people should relate, think and feel, acceptance of others as they are and their definitions of themselves could be the major source of strength from which to draw.

The only group to emerge and consolidate its achievements began in the autumn of 1981. Numbers of people attending have been very high. The greatest number attending in the summer of 1982 was around 85, which levelled off at 30 to 40 at weekly meetings. The number of people making enquiries by telephone was in excess of 2000 in the first year. Clearly the need for a nationwide support network is evident, even though this is proving difficult to establish.

BARRIERS ASIDE

When roles and social facades are put aside, it will be tremendously releasing and exciting to relate to others in truly creative ways. Labels which separate us emphasise our differences, which includes the expedient label of bisexual used here. Once these are abandoned, we will discover that what we have in common is much greater than any differences. That being human is much more varied, far less certain but very dynamic, if the challenge is met. The problem now is how to explore our potential in a caplete and fulfilling way, when the road ahead is unclear and can only be mapped out as we move forward.

This article, first written in August 1982, has been revised and extended to take account of criticisms and more recent thinking. Special thanks to Sarah and Sue - sorry Sue, I just couldn't get my head around illustrating "all the problems" of tangled interpersonal relationships.

Intense Loving

The evening started with a playful mood
But soon I realised this was to be serious.
I looked up at your beautiful face,
And that told me you wern't playing...

Anymore...

The smile had gone from your eyes,
Your mouth closed.
I knew you weren't joking...

Your look was now intense -
Intense love had replaced the fun.
The giggling, joking about...
Playfully touching my mouth,
kissing my ear.
We suddenly became serious...

Your clear blue eyes stared into mine,
as we were inches apart.
And your mouth touched my forehead,
then my cheek,
then carressed my mouth,
and then my arms wouldn't let you go.

And as you kissed my shoulder,
my hands ran through your hair.

We undressed each other,
and carressed each other,
and lay in each other's arms.

Contented...

I love you so very much.

In the morning the playfulness was back.
We acted almost like kids in the perfumed bath,
and we dressed,
then kissed,
then left for work.

Promising to stay together for ever.
Forever...
We will never part.
They can't make us.
Because we love each other just too much...

Leigh Anne Gray

NON-VIOLENCE AND THE STATE

Philip Kane

A new strategy has been developed with which we can change the world, or so it is sometimes claimed. The heady days of mass demonstrations at Greenham Common may be long gone but the apostles of non-violent direct action have lost none of their zeal. Sit-downs and 'die-ins' occur almost as a matter of course whether the occassion is a 'Stop the City' demo or a Remembrance Sunday parade.

Yet few people pause to question the validity of 'non-violent' methods. They are simply assumed to be correct. For instance, CND chairperson Joan Ruddock has been quoted in the magazine 'Marxism Today' as saying that:

"There is a growing awareness that this way of behaving is not only good in itself but is actually something that wins in situations where the peace movement is forced through no action of its own into confrontation with the authorities."[1]

This brief statement neatly paraphrases the main arguments raised in favour of non-violent direct action, that it (1) is a means of waging a successful campaign, (2) exposes the brutality of the State and so attains a degree of moral supremacy, and (3) has a positive effect on the participants.

The first two of these points have been adequately debunked on many occassions elsewhere.[2] Suffice it to say, for the purposes of this article, that cruise missiles have been deployed by the State without real difficulty in spite of an energetic and sustained NVDA campaign. Perhaps the supporters of NVDA have been taking some note of the criticisms, for they have fallen back on the potential of their strategy as a consciousness-raising exercise as their main justification. It is this claim that I propose to examine briefly.

Non-violence supposedly implies a rejection of aggression. On the surface this can appear to be a clever political technique. By refusing to use or respond to any form of violence it seems as though we can both expose and link up everything from seal-culls and police tactics to male violence and the nuclear holocaust. While these links need to be made in the course of political activity, it is necessary at the same time to indicate ways in which such problems can be ended. In this aspect 'non-violent' strategies are not only inadequate but are actually counter-productive.

Everyone has read about or seen photos of protesters being hauled off to the awaiting Black Marias by burly policemen. The victims, true to the spirit of their chosen methods, have offered no resistance.[3] Whether or not this exposes police brutality - and let's face it, at the moment most people believe that they are entitled to be brutal - the absence of resistance suggests an acceptance of their violence.

This is crucial. By failing to challenge the <u>right</u> of the State (represented by its instruments, the police/armed forces) to exercise social control, 'non-violence' fails to challenge the other forms of power in the existing structure of society, all of which the State props up and perpetuates.

Virtually all of our social relationships are built on the principle of domination-subordination. When the State moves in to break up a 'non-violent' protest and is permitted to do so unopposed, that principle is <u>reinforced</u> not only in the consciousness of those directly involved but also for the masses of people who learn of the event secondhand. The threat of violence, upon which domination ultimately depends, becomes more threatening; to challenge the status quo appears increasingly daunting and pointless.

The unhampered State thus grows more powerful and 'acceptable'. Meanwhile, for most of its opponents any change to a better society becomes a point on a rapidly receding horizon and social struggle ends up as a form of permanent protest with no apparent hope of lasting achievement. So rather than being a consciousness-raising exercise, 'non-violence' (and, by extension, pacifism as a whole) is in reality a consciousness-depressant.

It is likely that NVDA will in future be a recurrent strategy not only for the peace movement but for a wide variety of other struggles. It is the responsibility of those of us who wish to see real changes in society to continually criticise such methods. In response we should always call for real resistance to, and attacks upon, the power of authority. We would do well to remember and act on the words written by Pierre Joseph Proudhon in I848:

"Whoever lays their hand on me is a usurper and a tyrant; I declare them to be my enemy."

NOTES

I) From a discussion between Joan Ruddock, Helen John (a founder member of the Greenham Common peace camp) and ex-CND fulltimer Sally Davison. Exact date uncertain (I'm afraid I've lost it!) but published in I982.

2) See, for example:
Rip Bulkeley, Pete Goodwin, Ian Birchall, Peter Binns and Colin Sparks, '"If at first you don't succeed...": fighting against the Bomb in the I950's and I960's', in International Socialism 2:II (Winter I98I).
Barry Pavier, 'The Myth of Mahatma', in Socialist Review I982:8.
"Mahatma Gandhi", 'Disarming the State - Strategy for Resistance', in Black Flag Quarterly Vol.7 No.5 (Winter I984).

3) "203 people arrested without a struggle or anyone fighting back...as if people wanted to be arrested so they could tell their kids..." (participant in 'Stop the City' demo on September 29th I983, quoted in Insurrection No.I - April I984). This illustrates the extent to which State repression is accepted by 'non-violent' demonstrators. In order to fully comprehend their passivity it has to be remembered that only I500 people took part in this particular protest; the proportion of demonstrators arrested was therefore more than I in 8.

BOOK REVIEW

BOOK REVIEW 'So you think you're attracted to the same sex?' by John Hart, published by Penguin at £1.75.

First the good news: this little book has a whole chapter on bisexuality and being published by Penguin will presumably be available in all good high street bookshops. Its slightly surprising title should attract the attention of people who haven't decided whether they are heterosexual or homosexual and discusses whether there are advantages in not deciding. It also explains how it is that large numbers of people who adopt a bisexual behaviour, still do not identify as bisexual and hints at the imminent dawning of a new bisexual awareness.
However the style is flat, unexciting and unneccessarily 'scholarly'. Was Mr Hart frightened the book might not be acceptable to a major paperback publisher if it were seen to sell the joys of gay sex and relationships too enthusiastically.
He asks questions and avoids answering them(what can two gay people do in bed?) some points are difficult to follow and some examples seem irrelevant. The information about the Author indicates that he was in Australia during 1983 which may explain why he seems slightly out of touch. He refers frequently to Gay News, but whether the old or new is not clear as he quotes an address that both used for a while, but is now incorrect. Hidden amongst these irritations are some important messages and directions. See what you make of it!

David Burkle.

eternal flame

The story so far....Beautiful 21-year old photography student GEORGE D'ARCY has fallen victim to the captivating CHARLENE BRONSON, manager of the 'Black Cat' casino. He knows that she is a notorious maniser who has already broken the heart of his best friend, the blond fashion designer THOMAS DARNLEY, whose once stunning features now show the ravages of drink.... George has confided in his tutor, the strong and gentle ANITA DALE. Several years his senior, Anita is widowed,having lost her charming young husband in a tragic car crash two years before. She understands George's turmoil and finds herself strangely drawn to the fledgeling photographer, although as yet she dare not speak her love.....

Listlessly George lay on his sofa, thumbing through the glossy pages of 'Man's World'. Every so often his large brown eyes glanced at the telephone. It had been three days since Charlene had called him. He could of course phone her at the 'Black Cat' but that would appear forward and confirm what he felt she must already know - that he was hopelessly infatuated.

'If the phone rings' he thought 'I'll let it ring at least five times before answering'.

He turned back to 'Man's World'. Its pages were full of startlingly elegant models displaying fashions that as yet he could not afford. He noticed that many were sporting small, dainty moustaches - maybe he should let his grow?

He picked up a handmirror that lay by the sofa and thoughtfully studied his reflection...He decided against the moustache, it would definatley detract from the cheekbones, and besides he could imagine Charlene's reaction...

'A moustache, Georgie,how becoming! But it's a little prickly, maybe you could cover it with tape until it's out of the awkward stage!'

A knock at the door disturbed his reverie. With pounding heart, George went to open it - surely it couldn't be Charlene? It wasn't. Thomas Darnley stood there, red-eyed and a little the worse for drink.

'Thomas, how lovely to see you. Come in' said George, concealing his dissapointment.

'Hello George' said Thomas slowly. 'How about a Martini?'

'I think coffee would be more sensible' replied George.

Thomas nodded and followed him into the kitchen. When the coffeewas ready they made their way back to the drawing room and sat side by side on the sofa. Thomas put his cup down, turned to George and laid a hand on his wrist.

'Listen to me George. Charlene is no good. Loving her is like an addiction - it gets so bad that when you're not with her you spend all your time waiting for her next call'.

'Oh really Thomas! It isn't like that at all' lied George. 'I just like Charlene as a friend - she's interesting company.'

Thomas looked at his friend long and hard, then sighed deeply. 'Oh, George, please believe me. Leave her before its too late.'

George forced himself to laugh. He tried to make it sound light-hearted - but the sound came out somewhat strained.
'Come now, Tom, I'm a big boy now. I can look after myself!'
Thomas shook his head sadly. 'George, you're young and talented, don't let Charlene spoil your life as she did mine. I thought she loved me and I gave up everything - my career, my family, my fiancee....'
'I didn't know you and Janet had been engaged' said George.
'Yes. She's an architect now and married to someone else. When I think I deserted her for Charlene...' Tears sprang into his blue eyes.
'Don't cry,' said George, passing him a tissue. 'I'm sure Charlene didn't mean to upset you're life. It was bad luck, that's all'.
'Bad Luck!' sniffed Thomas. 'She couldn't care less whether I live or die!'
It was true, Guiltily George remembered how Charlene had laughed when he had spoken about Thomas - 'Oh, that poor little sap', she had sneered. 'Should have stayed at home with his daddie- far too sensitive for the big wide world.'
'Nonsense, Thomas' said George defensively. 'Why can't you just forget the whole thing and find a nice steady woman who'll care for you?'
'And my drink problem?' retorted Thomas. Just then the phone rang. George leapt for the reciever - it had barely rung once.
'Hello?....oh Charlene, what a pleasant surprise....no,no, nothing special....sure....about 15 minutes....fine....bye!' He replaced the receiver. 'That was Charlene, she's on her way over.Maybe you'd better leave now.'
Thomas gave him a look in which sadness was tinged with contempt.
'OK, I'll see myself out'.
George breathed a sigh of relief. Now he had just ten minutes to get ready .He studied his face in the bathroom. Yes, he would shave - there was just the hint of a shadow. That done, he splashed on the expensive aftershave that was Charlene's gift and stood back to comb his hair. Thick and lustrous, it was the same brown as his eyes. He ran a hand through it and shivered slighly as he remembered how she had done the same at their last meeting - Oh George, I'd like to run a damn sight more than my hands through that little lot!' George blushed at the memory.
Suddenly there was a loud knock at the door. He forced himself to walk slowly towards it and opened it.
There stood Charlene, swinging a bottle of champagne in one hand.

.....Will Charlene succeed in seducing George?
.....Will Thomas wreke revenge?
.....Will Anita finally come out of the closet and into the story?
Find out this ..and more.. in the next issue!!

maria

Oh, to be normal....

In a novel I am trying to write one of the leading characters comments on how smug heterosexuals are when confronted with bisexuals or homosexuals. Most of them look at us as if we come from another planet, or start giggling, or (the worst insult in my opinion) say "Ooh...You're not queer, are you? We're perfectly normal..." Of course, if none of that is sufficiently hurtful, there's always the physical assault that's liberally handed out to bisexuals and homosexuals.....

I just do not know why we still have to put up with all that we do, in this so-called "enlightened" age. Doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists have finally agreed that bisexuality and homosexuality are perfectly normal aspects of human sexuality, so why, oh why must we who do not conform to Society's Ideal - through no fault of our own - deny our exsistence, in fear of what might follow?

Not all of us do, I know, but I, certainly, am too scared to admit to many people that I am bisexual, in fear of getting beaten up or, maybe even worse laughed at... And it took me almost seven years to admit it to my immediate family. They cannot understand it at all, but at least they are not going to kick me out of the house as so many "caring" parents do when confronted with something so totally alien to their way of life. Maybe if the subject of bisexuality and homosexuality had been studied in a compassionate and serious way in the past, instead of covered up and treated as a crime almost as bad as murder, society wouldn't have the problems it has at the moment.

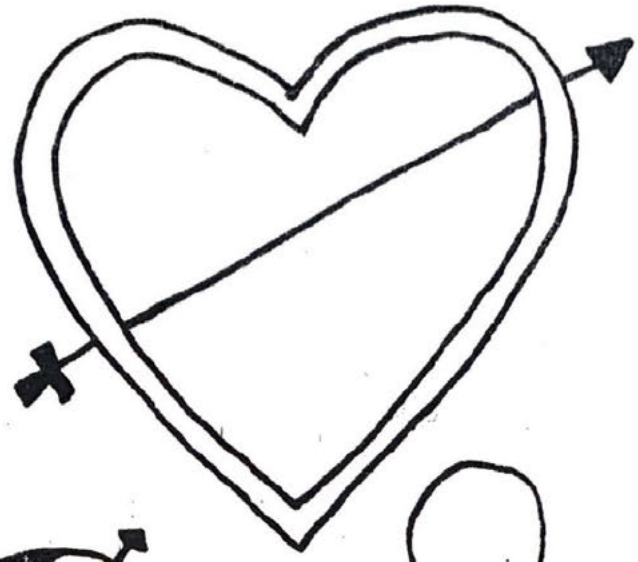
What's so great about being straight anyway? And if being "Queer" is so abnormal and unnatural, why are there so many people walking around with this problem?

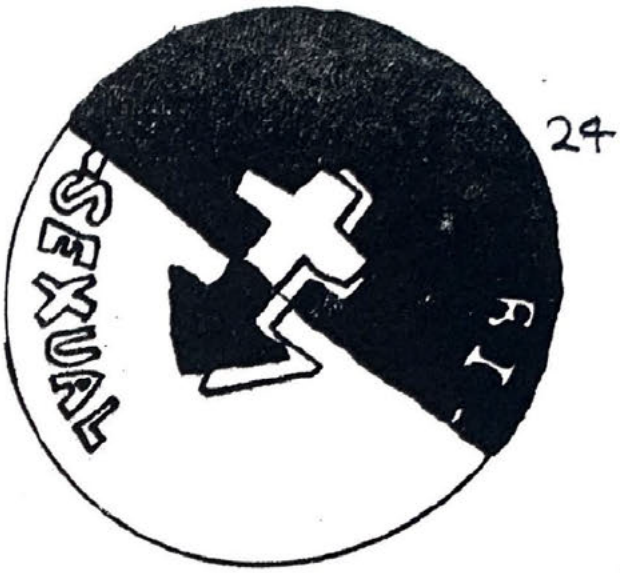
Heterosexuals really must have more understanding, try and see things from our point of view, place themselves in our position. They seem to think that people like us do it on purpose - love members of our own sex purely to corrupt this idea of Man+Woman=Marriage and Kids....

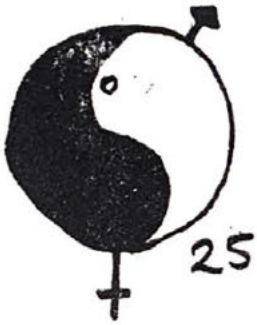
Maybe I've got it wrong. I know there are heterosexuals who genuinely don't give a damn about a person's sexuality, but every time I see a comedian(?) on the television, making pathetic jokes at our expense, I feel like throwing up, crying my eyes out, and running away and hiding from everyone, until this "curse" has gone....

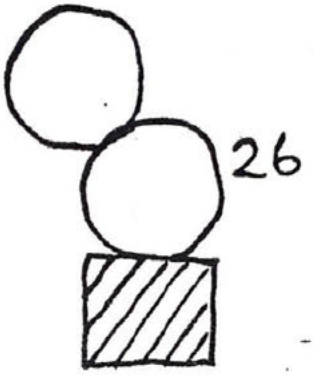
Society's narrow-minded oppression does nothing for people (especially young people who find it hard to cope) coming to terms with the shock of realising they are attracted to their own sex.....

Leigh Gray









Four late entries for the Logo Competition. "Better late than Never" though!

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SIGMA is the support group for heterosexual people whose partners are homosexual, bisexual or have a sexual orientation that is different from their own.

SIGMA meet in London in the evening of the first Friday of each month and occasionally arrange weekend conferences. A newsletter is produced irregularly and distributed to members. There is a network of contacts around the country.

SIGMA can be contacted by writing with SAE to:

BM SIGMA
LONDON WC1 3XX

or by phoning 01-837 7324 (Gay Switchboard) who will give the telephone contact for the day.

PARTNERS ALWAYS WELCOME AT SIGMA MEETINGS.

The first issue of LAVENDER LESBIAN LIST - a lesbian books newsletter - is now available from Lavender Menace Bookshop. The list features new and recommended books - lesbian and feminist, fiction and non-fiction. It contains short descriptions, longer reviews, and events of interst to lesbians. For a copy or further information please write to Lavender Menace Bookshop, 11a Forth Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LE (sae appreciated) or ring 031-556 0079

BISEXUAL ANARCHISTS
Contact Philip Kane, LBG, BM/BI, London WC1N 3XX

GLASTONBURY CND FESTIVAL
22-24 June.
would any readers attneding who are interested in social contact get in touch with Phil, LBG, BM/BI, London WC1N 3XX

I would be most grateful if you could help me to find contacts in a similar standing as myself - even if they are penfriends or you can put me in contact with someone near to Colchester. I hope that you can help me because I don't know quite how to go about finding people who are Bi and not completely gay.

J.A. (Mr.), Colchester

Our list of contacts outside London is small at present and we have none as yet in Colchester. It would be helpful if people writing to us would say whether it's OK for us to pass their name, address or phone number to others in a similar position and give a bit more information about themselves eg age, whether single or married, if so whether partner 'knows', job and other interests, also feelings about their sexuality may be relevant.

This magazine is running personal ads free for an introductory period, so why don't you try one for penfriends. We will forward any letters we receive, marked JAC in the bottom left hand corner, directly to you.

David.

THE ANGST

THE ANGST
NEVER DISAPPEARS
IT MERELY CHANGES FORM
WE WALK THE TIGHTROPE
OF ACCEPTANCE
BY REJECTING THE NORM, THEIR NORM
TO REVEAL OUR TRUE IDENTITIES
WE BECOME VULNERABLE
TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO FIND FLAWS
LIKE SEAGULLS SCAVENGING
ON EMOTIONAL SHIPWRECKS
THEY COME AT US WITH OPEN CLAWS
AND CLOSED MINDS
THEY DO AS SOCIETY DICTATES
MARRIAGE, CHILDREN, HOUSE
TUMBLE DRIERS
AND WASHING MACHINES
SPOUSE
NORMALITY
IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

JO

THE BI-MONTHLY 50p

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THE LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP meets every Tuesday evening at 8.00pm at Heaven, The Arches, off Villiers Street, London WC2, for discussions, workshops and social - no membership required.